

March 29, 2012

Navy unveils first fleet P-8A Poseidon to public, maritime community at annual symposium



NAS Jacksonville, Fla. – Guests tour the newly unveiled P-8A Poseidon aircraft after the fleet transition roll-out ceremony at NAS Jacksonville March 28. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Salt Cebe)

NAS JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Navy made history March 28 when the newest multi-mission maritime aircraft, P-8A Poseidon, graced invited guests with its first public appearance as a member of the patrol and reconnaissance community, and opened the doors to its Integrated Training Center.

"We are making history today as we officially roll out the P-8A Poseidon to the maritime community," said Rear Adm. Michael Hewitt, Patrol and Reconnaissance Group commander, at the ceremony in Patrol Squadron (VP) 30's hangar in Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla. "The P-8 is going to bring the latest technology into the hands of our smartest young men and women, and we can't wait to see what they're going to do with it."

The U.S. Navy accepted the first low-rate initial production P-8A Poseidon aircraft earlier this month and delivered it to the fleet replacement squadron for the P-8A, VP-30, March 5. It was unveiled March 28 not only to the public, but also to past, current, and future members of the Maritime Aircraft community during the annual "2012 Maritime Patrol Association Symposium." This year, the weeklong symposium is celebrating P-3C Orion's 50 years of service.

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The fleet transition and rollout ceremony saw many members from the first maritime patrol squadrons, the P-3 community, the vice chief of naval operations and the under secretary of the Navy. Under Secretary of the Navy Robert Work was the honored guest and keynote speaker for the event. Work spoke about maritime history, and in particular, the P-3C Orion and what it has done for the Navy and how the P-8 will continue its legacy.

"As the Navy's replacement platform for the P-3C, the P-8A Poseidon is transforming how the Navy's maritime patrol and reconnaissance force will man, train, operate and deploy," Work said.

"The P-3 will continue to support the mission until its retirement when all fleet squadrons are equipped with the P-8A," said Capt. Michael Moran, Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft program office (PMA-290) program manager. "The P-3 has laid the ground work for the future of Navy Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance aircraft and has flown countless hours over land and sea, all while maintaining an excellent service record. As we transition to the P-8, we look to continue the tradition that the Navy's current work horse, the P-3, has set in place."

In addition to unveiling the aircraft to the public, the P-8A Integrated Training Center (ITC) was dedicated in a ceremony where Work and other distinguished guests cut the ceremonial ribbon before allowing the public to have a rare opportunity to see the facility through a guided tour.

The P-8A ITC includes operational flight trainers, fixed trainers for weapons and operational systems of the P-8A, and the accompanying instructional and administrative spaces, along with secure and operation planning facilities.

"The training and readiness concept for the Poseidon was designed around a high fidelity simulator solution to provide cost-wise warfighting readiness," Work said. "The P-8A Integrated Training Facility includes leading-edge operational flight trainers, which will provide innovative and cutting-edge training for today's warfighter."

When the trainers were installed in the state-of-the-art ITC in December 2011, Capt. John Feeney, Naval Aviation Training Systems (PMA-205) program manager and member of the MPRA community for 20 years, said, "I know the fleet has anticipated this day for a long time. P-8A simulators will serve as the foundation for training new and returning aviators from day one."

Editor's note: This aircraft is the first of 13 that Boeing will deliver as part of a low-rate initial production contract. Boeing delivered the first Operational Flight Trainer and Weapons Tactics Trainer to the Navy last year, and have additional devices scheduled for delivery through 2013. The Poseidon is built by a Boeing-led industry team that includes CFM International, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, Spirit AeroSystems, BAE Systems and GE Aviation.

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NAS Jacksonville, Fla. – Under Secretary of the Navy Robert Work speaks during the P-8A Poseidon aircraft fleet transition and roll-out ceremony March 28. The P-8A Poseidon, a multi-mission maritime aircraft, represents the most advanced airborne command and control capabilities. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Salt Cebe)



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NAS Jacksonville, Fla. – Under Secretary of the Navy Robert Work and Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown (center) cut the ceremonial ribbon March 28 in front of the new P-8A Integrated Training Center as senior naval officers and distinguished guests look on. (From left) Whiting-Turner President Ron Eisenberg, Boeing President and CEO of Defense, Space and Security Dennis Muilenburg, Brown, NAS Jax Commanding Officer Capt. Bob Sanders, VP-30 Commanding Officer Capt. Mark Stevens, Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mark Ferguson, Commander, Naval Air Forces Vice Adm. Allen Myers, Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Group Rear Adm. Michael Hewitt and Commander, Navy Region Southeast Rear Adm. Jack Scorby Jr. (U.S. Navy photo by Clark Pierce)